

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This letter is responsive to the Office Action mailed on March 14, 2006. Accordingly, this response is filed in a timely manner.

Claim Amendments

In this response, claims 1, 9, 12 and 17 have been amended. Claims 8 and 18 have been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, there are currently 18 claims pending for this application.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the keyboard of the handheld electronic device further comprises a spacebar key vertically disposed in between the first and second group of keys. Support for this claim amendment is claim 8, figures 1-3, and the corresponding text of the application as filed.

Claim 9 has been amended to depend from claim 1 since the subject matter of claim 8 was imported into claim 1 and claim 8 was cancelled without prejudice.

Claim 12 has been amended to recite that the keyboard further comprises at least one of: a spacebar key vertically disposed in between the first and second group of keys, the spacebar key being contoured to mate with adjacent keys in the first and second group of keys; and a navigation pad disposed in between the first and second group of keys. Support for this claim amendment is claim 18, figures 1-3 and the corresponding text of the application as filed.

Claim 17 has been amended to correct a typographical error. The word "of" has been inserted after the word "each" on the first line of claim 17.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102(e) and 35 USC 103(a)

In section 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner argued that claims 1-7, 10-17, and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Han (6,726,106).

However, in section 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 8-9 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, the Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to recite the feature recited in the previous version of claim 8. The Applicant has also amended independent claim 12 to recite the features recited in the previous version of claim 18.


Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 12 are novel and inventive over the cited reference and should be allowed. Further, since claims 2 to 7, 9 to 11, 13 to 17 and 19 to 20, depend either directly or indirectly from one of claims 1 and 12, and introduce other patentable features, the Applicant respectfully submits that these claims should also be allowed.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance and requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner feels that a telephone discussion would be helpful to resolve any issues, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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